

**Draft Meeting Notes
LCR MSCP Steering Committee
October 23, 2019**

Attending Via Conference Call

Greg Adams	Bert Bell	Dee Bradshaw
Linda Carbone	Shawn Carlson	Gil Cristobal
Chuck Cullom	JR Echard	Jess Gwinn
Vineetha Kartha	Jeff Humphrey	Ned Hyduke
Matt Jeppson	Jimmy Knowles	Jamie Kelley
Jill Knipes	Bill Lamb	Victor Lujan
Kara Mathews	Terry Murphy	Jessica Neuwerth
Wade Noble	Sara Price	Melody Roberts
Peggy Roefer	Carrie Ronning	Dana Sedig
Seth Shanahan	Laura Simonek	Jim Stolberg
John Swett	Dale Turner	Laura Vecerina
David Vigil		

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Introductions

The meeting was convened at 9:30 a.m. by John Swett. There were self-introductions of all attending. Seth Shanahan chaired the meeting.

Review of Agenda

The agenda was reviewed and approved.

Public Comments

No public comments were offered.

Approve June 26, 2019 Meeting Notes

The June 26, 2019 meeting notes were approved, with minor edits (Moved by Sara Price, seconded by Chuck Cullom, and adopted by consensus).

Jess Gwinn introduced Jeff Humphrey who is the new Field Supervisor for the Arizona Ecological Service Field Office. He has been in that position for over a year. Previously he was head of External Affairs and worked with Leslie Fitzpatrick in the planning and roll out of the LCR MSCP, so he is familiar with the program.

WORK PLAN AND BUDGET

John Swett noted that the Steering Committee approved the FY20 Work Plan and Budget at the June Steering Committee conference call. Reclamation received the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) concurrence letter on August 12, 2019. John then reviewed the FY20 funding schedule which shows FY20 total required contributions of \$33,268,164. This includes \$4,948,763.23 from Arizona, \$3,763,399.14 from Nevada, and \$4,411,034.38 from California. John noted that the federal government was on a continuing resolution until November 21st. The Steering Committee approved work plans for a total of \$27,107,844 with \$1,194,794 contributed to the Remedial Measures Fund. No funding will be contributed to the land and water fund in FY20. John noted that Reclamation will not be spending all of the required funding this fiscal year due to current construction capability. He noted that the remaining balance will be held in reserve by Reclamation for use in future years. San Diego County Water Authority is still using their funding credits in FY20.

PROCESS/PROGRAM UPDATES

Increasing Change-In-Flow Coverage: John reviewed actions the Steering Committee has taken to date. He noted that at the October 24, 2018 Steering Committee meeting an ad hoc group was formed to explore the need for and options to increase the change in flow coverage. On April 24, 2019, the Steering Committee passed Motion 19-004 approving Reclamation to initiate discussions with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regarding consultation to increase future change in flow coverage up to 1,574,000 afy between Hoover and Parker Dams.

Since April, there have been a number of meetings where various topics were discussed. This has included working with Reclamation staff to understand how the original impact analysis was done and how hydrologic changes over the last 10 to 15 years compare to those that were modeled. The ad hoc group is still exploring options for moving forward. Jeff Humphrey asked to set up a timeframe for when the FWS could get involved in these discussions. John said that he would set up a call with FWS to further discuss. Seth Shanahan, as chair of the ad hoc group said that he would participate as well. John noted that originally Reclamation was leading this effort, but that now leadership is being provided by the ad hoc group. John indicated that we will keep this topic on future Steering Committee meeting agendas and report on the status.

STEERING COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

John Swett reviewed the Steering Committee schedule noting a Financial Work Group conference call scheduled for February 20th and the 15 Year Tour scheduled for March 24th through the 26th. A Work Group meeting will be held the afternoon before the start of the tour.

GENERAL

Lake Mead Razorback Sucker Workgroup: Jim Stolberg provided an update on discussions at the Lake Mead Razorback Sucker Workgroup meeting concerning future razorback sucker stockings in the Grand Canyon. Mark McKinstry, from Reclamation's Upper Colorado Regional Office, is going to put together a group to discuss agency responsibilities or requirements to augment the Grand Canyon razorback sucker population based on changed conditions at Pearce Ferry Rapid or prior Biological Opinion's. A science panel has convened twice since 2009 and recommended both times that no razorback sucker stockings should occur. However, Lake Mead elevations and localized conditions have changed since that time which has led to the discussion of possible stockings. The Lake Mead Work Group would partner to collect wild-born razorback sucker larvae from the lake which would be reared at the Lake Mead Hatchery if a decision was made for this purpose.

Glen Canyon Adaptive Management Program: Seth Shanahan wanted to keep everyone informed of activities across the Colorado basin. He noted that here there was a Glen Canyon Dam Technical Work Group Meeting that was held earlier in the week and provided an overview of some of the topics discussed. Seth noted that there was an update on the rainbow trout study being conducted by the Arizona Department of Fish and Game (AGFD). AGFD is working on a research project to determine why catch rates for rainbow trout are low. They want to know the persistence of rainbow trout stocking with regard to mortality, harvest, and immigration. Seth provided information on a proposal for a pump back storage project to generate hydropower. The project would involve construction of two dams on the little Colorado River. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission posted a notice for public comment in the federal register. Comments are due in November. The National Park Service (NPS) started implementing an expanded non-native aquatic species management plan. One action of the plan consists of incentives to harvest brown trout. NPS will use incentive harvests to remove about 50% of the estimated 5,000 adult brown trout to decrease population. These incentives include NPS paying anglers \$33 per fish for the first 1,000 fish. Seth noted that because of how dry it has been, there was insufficient sediment input to trigger a fall High Flow Event. There is no information yet to determine if one could be conducted in spring.

Save the Colorado River et al. V. Department of Interior: Matt Jeppson provided an update on the lawsuit that was filed by Save the Colorado River, Center for Biological Diversity, and Living Rivers. The lawsuit alleges that Reclamation and the Department Of Interior (DOI) ignored climate science in the December 2016 Record of Decision for the Glen Canyon Dam Long-Term Experimental and Management Plan Final Impact Statement (LTEMP FEIS). The lawsuit alleges that Reclamation and DOI failed to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act. The lawsuit demands that BOR and DOI fix this by redoing the alternative analysis in the LTEMP FEIS including a full range of alternatives based on predicted climate change-related impacts on the flow of water in the Colorado River, including the decommissioning and removal of Glen Canyon Dam. The lawsuit says that Reclamation relied exclusively on "historic" inflow data, without considering the lower flows from climate-change models forecast.

Unique Wildlife Sightings: Carrie Ronning noted that a number of covered species have returned to the same conservation sites year after year. A male summer tanager was recaptured on May 22 and June 26, 2019 at the Beal Lake Conservation Area (BLCA) during annual bird monitoring. He was first captured and banded at the BLCA on June 9, 2011, making him almost 8 years old. Summer tanagers leave the area each fall and typically winter from central Mexico into northern South America. LCR MSCP records show that he has been recaptured at BLCA in 4 other years since 2011. A southwestern willow flycatcher that was banded in 2008 at the Overton Wildlife Management Area was recaptured at Alamo Lake this year. He was at least 13 years old, which ties him for the willow flycatcher longevity record. Carrie also noted that five southwestern willow flycatcher nests at Topock Marsh produced 12 fledglings. This represents the highest number of fledglings and successful nests at Topock Marsh since 2008. A question was asked about sightings of northern Mexican gartersnakes. Carrie noted that trapping by the FWS at Havasu National Wildlife Refuge detected 14 individual snakes, with 7 located in the BLCA willow marsh.

SUMMARY AND ACTION ITEMS

Seth Shanahan reviewed actions by the Steering Committee noting that the meeting agenda and previous meeting notes were approved. He noted that the ad hoc group on increasing the reduction in flow coverage would keep the Steering Committee apprised of its efforts.

ADJOURN

The conference call adjourned at 10:25 am